

John Turn Farm (Camp Ministerium)
East side of River Rd. (LR45012),
1.8 miles south of U.S. Rte. 209
Shawnee on Delaware vicinity,
Middle Smithfield Township
Monroe County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-1274

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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. PA-1274

JOHN TURN FARM
(Camp Ministerium)

Location:

Located on the east side of River Rd (LR45012), 1.8 miles south of U.S. Rte. 209, approximately 6 miles northeast of Shawnee on Delaware, in Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. Shawnee on Delaware, Middle Smithfield Township, Monroe County, Pennsylvania.

USGS Bushkill Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 18.498100.4544880.

Present Owner:

United States Government.

Present Use:

Most of the structures were demolished in 1977 or are extensively damaged. The smokehouse and weave house remain vacant.

Significance:

This farm was the home of John Turn (1783-1867), a local cabinetmaker and carpenter. He was responsible for the carpentry in the construction of several dwellings and dependencies in the vicinity.

The farm layout and type of outbuildings represent the necessary functions of a self-sufficient farm in the area. The smokehouse and weave house are important because few, if any, still remain in the area.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Dates of erection:

House: Erected in 1832. Between 1819 and 1828, John Turn, Sr. purchased several tracts of land from heirs of John Dewitt. According to Alfred Mathews, in 1832 he constructed the dwelling which now bears his name. It has been theorized on the basis of architectural evidence that the main portion of the house dates from the late 18th or early 19th century. Apparently, either John Turn, Sr., built in 1832 in a style and method usually attributed to an earlier period, or the core of his residence was a structure built prior to 1832.

Barn: This barn replaced an earlier barn that was erected in 1833. According to Alfred Mathews, the original barn, located northwest of the main house, was built in 1833. The present barn was constructed circa 1912 by Victor H. Dimmick, and is evidently

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the one described in 1915 as "a modern dairy barn with every late improvement, comprising also the famous James' stall and overhead carrying system" (Bells Ringing the Message of Progress).

Lime kiln: Date of erection is unknown. However, judging from the use of railroad rails in construction and the good condition of the structure, it probably dates from the late 19th century.

Smokehouse: Date of erection is unknown.

Weave house: Erected in the nineteenth century. While the date of construction is unknown, it appears that the foundation predates the frame portion of the building. Alterations of the frame structure probably date from the late nineteenth century and include the addition of some horizontal members on the frame, a new roof and possibly the exterior clapboard.

2. Original and subsequent owners: This is an incomplete chain of title found in the records of the Monroe County Court House, Pennsylvania, unless otherwise noted.

1811 Will: 14 October 1811 Probated
John Dewitt, Senior Wayne County
Bequests: Wife Catherine to have use of plantation
and tracts of land, during her life; at her
death, estate to be divided equally among her
five children: John, Jacob, Levi, Elsey and
Sarah the wife of Moses Chambers.

1815 Deed: 29 June 1815 Pike County
John Dewitt, Junior,
to
Levi Dewitt
Consideration: \$1,000.
Acreage: 2 tracts (1) 40 acres, 27 perches
(2) 47 acres, 26 perches.
Grant: being that portion of the estate of John
Dewitt, Senior, allotted to John Dewitt, Junior;
two tracts, "the first of them including the
Buildings and Orchard."

1818 Deed: 10 April 1818 Recorded 8 Feb. 1819
Book 3, page 444 Pike County
Joseph Harmon, "Yeoman," and Anna, ux, of Middle Smithfield
Township,
to
John Turn, "House Carpenter"
Consideration: \$1612.
Acreage: 61 acres.

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Grant: being the portion of the estate of John Dewitt, Sr., which was conveyed to John Dewitt, Jr., by other heirs and legal Representatives of Dewitt, Sr. By deed dated 11 Feb. 1817, John Dewitt, Jr. conveyed the same to Joseph Harman.

- 1819 Deed: 1 March 1819
Monroe County Historical Society Collection
Levi Dewitt, farmer
to
John Turn, "mecannick"
Consideration: \$245.
Acreage: 7 acres, 22 perches.
Grant: (It is not known whether buildings were conveyed with this tract or not; however, Levi Dewitt is known to have been buried on the hill opposite the John Turn farmhouse site).
- 1826 Deed: 11 December 1826 Recorded 19 Jan. 1831
Book 9, page 375 Pike County
John V. Rush, Administrator of the Estate of Moses Chambers, deceased,
to
John Turn, Middle Smithfield Township
Consideration: \$310.
Acreage: 26 acres, 70 perches.
Grant: part of John Dewitt's land, obtained through partition among heirs of John Dewitt
- 1828 Deed: 14 January 1828 Recorded 17 Aug. 1831
Book 10 page 19 Pike County
Solomon Westbrook and Hannah, ux.,
to
John Turn, farmer
Consideration: \$800.
Acreage: 2 tracts (1) 47 acres (2) 33 acres.
Grant: two tracts, "all of which lands are improved with a log house and frame barn thereon;" being land which Jacob Westbrook, Administrator of Estate of Saffarine (?) Westbrook, deceased, conveyed to Solomon Westbrook, by deed.
- 1854 Deed: 18 October 1854 Recorded 19 March 1878
Book 27, page 208
John Turn
to
John Turn, Jr.
Consideration: \$1000. and \$100. per annum for the life of John Turn, Sr.
Acreage: 179 acres.

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- 1906 Deed: 1 Jan. 1906 Recorded 3 Jan. 1906
Book 61, page 198
John Turn, Jr.
to
Charles R. Turn
Consideration: \$6,500.
Acreage: two tracts (1) 179 (2) 48 acres, 36 perches.
- 1930 Will: 21 July 1927 Probated 17 April 1930
Book 12, page 40
Charles R. Turn
Bequests: farm of 206 acres, Middle Smithfield
Township, to daughter Mary, wife of Harvey W.
Blair.
- 1931 Deed: 24 February 1931 Recorded 22 April 1933
Book 117, page 683
John S. Turn, Edwin B. Turn, Ralph G. Turn,
to
Mary Turn Blair
Grant: agreement of refusal to purchase, thereby
allowing Mary Turn Blair to sell the farm as
stipulated in the will of Charles R. Turn.
- 1945 Deed: 12 September 1945 Recorded 26 Sept. 1945
Book 151, page 133
Mary Turn Blair and Harvey W. Blair, Elizabeth T. and Allen
H. Garris, and Caroline Walker and Edward H. Walker, and
the First Stroudsburg National Bank, Trustee,
to
Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania and
Adjacent States
Consideration: \$20,000.
Acreage: 2 tracts (1) 179 (2) lot known as "River
School" adjoining land of the late Charles R.
Turn.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: John Turn Sr. was a carpenter by trade. It is believed that he built the house and the original barn. It is not known whether he built the smokehouse and weave house.
5. Original plan and construction: Kilns such as that on the Turn farm were common on farms where there was a supply of limestone available. According to Stark Michael who lived nearby and worked similar kilns, a base of corn cobs or sumac wood was placed at the bottom of the hole, on the grate. Then layers of coal (or wood) and chunk limestone were alternated until there

were about twenty to twenty-five layers. The bottom was lit and allowed to burn three or four days until the fire reached the top, then the lime (still in chunk form) was drawn out the bottom or eye, until all the cool lime was removed. The top was kept full with new layers as the whole pile settled from removal at the bottom. The operation could continue for many days.

6. Alterations and additions: All of the buildings on the farm have been altered in same fashion, some more than others.

The house has received numerous additions among which are the addition of a rear wing, a side wing and an elevated sleeping porch on the northwest elevation.

The original barn has been drastically affected by alterations. In 1954, after being purchased for renovation into a camp, the barn was used as a kitchen, dining room, assembly hall and society hall. Consequences of this remodeling include the construction of several small wings, the raising of the gambrel roof and the complete remodeling of the interior.

While it appears that substantial alterations have been made to the weave house in the late nineteenth century. The exact nature or extent cannot be fully determined. It is thought that much of the framing and wall covering has been replaced.

The smokehouse has received several alterations. The largest being the replacement of the roof and eaves. The old door and frame have also been replaced by a modern sheet metal door.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

John Turn Sr. was born in Upper Mt. Bethel Township and began his training as a cabinetmaker and carpenter in 1790 when he became an apprentice to George Bush, a carpenter and cabinetmaker in Shawnee.

Becoming established in the carpentry trade, John Turn Sr. had customers from Monroe and Pike Counties, Pennsylvania, and Pahaquarry and Walpack townships in New Jersey.

In 1811, John Turn Sr. purchased approximately 47 acres which eventually grew to become a large and prosperous farm under his son and grandson. The first improvements to the farm came 1832 when John Turn Sr. built the frame farm house and a barn a year later.

John Turn Sr. also became a prominent figure in the county as he was a founder and Elder of the Middle Smithfield Presbyterian Church, and was the first undertaker in Middle Smithfield township.

John Turn Jr. was born in 1821 and was a farmer by occupation. As a youth he worked as a craftsman on the Delaware River but eventually dedicated himself to his father's farm. In 1844 he rented his father's farm, which he purchased ten years later.

Charles R. Turn was born in 1865 to John and Ency Turn Jr. He became the General Manager and treasurer of the International Boiler Works Company of East Stroudsburg, and President of the Stroudsburg Creamery Company. He had "a splendid home in the old homestead property," and ran a "model farm" there, described in 1915 as "one of the show places of this section, already rich in agricultural properties of considerable value." (The Bells Ring The Message of Progress).

The farm remained in the family until 1945 when it was sold to the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium.

C. Sources of information:

1. Old views: Photocopy of a delineation of the Turn farm circa 1910. HABS photographs No. PA-1274-1

2. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Turn, John, Sr. Ledger, 1811-1854. Original in the possession of the Monroe County Historical Society, Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania.

Walters, Elizabeth Dimmick (Mrs. Horace.) Interview, 2 August 1971, Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania.

Walters, Elizabeth Dimmick (Mrs. Horace.) Typed manuscript (June, 1970), available in the Files of the National Park Service, Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Mathews, Alfred. History of Wayne, Pike and Monroe Counties, Pennsylvania. Philadelphia: R. T. Peck & Company, 1886.

"Presbyterian Church Inscription, Middle Smithfield, Pa." The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record. Vol. LXXIX, No. 3 (July, 1940), pp. 133-134.

Souder, Norman. "Historic Structures, Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area." Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, Washington, D.C., National park Service, July 1967.

"The Turn Farm, Near North Water Gap, Pa." The Bells Ringing the Message of Progress in Monroe County, Pennsylvania. East Stroudsburg: The Hughes Press, 1915.

Prepared by Lynn Beebe Weaver
Project Historian
Historic American
Buildings Survey
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PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

House: The two story frame dwelling is covered with clapboarding and has an asymmetrical four bay fenestration. A single interior end chimney, located on the northwest side of the building, pierces the ridge which runs parallel to the front elevation. An original front porch extends the length of the front elevation.

Barn: The present barn was erected circa 1912 and is located northwest of the house. A large frame bank barn, the structure is covered with clapboard and capped by a gambrel roof. A central louvered ventilator is located atop the barn. Presently, the barn contains three levels and several lofts.

Lime kiln: The lime kiln is located northwest of the house across the road. Situated in a wooded area and built in a hillside, the kiln is constructed of random rubble stone measuring approximately 16'-0" x 16'-0" in plan and 15'-6" in height. The kiln is stabilized by six iron tie rods running through the structure.

There are two major openings in the structure. The masonry above the 6'-0" opening on the main elevation is supported by three iron railroad rails and the second opening is circular and measures approximately 6'-0" in diameter and pierces the top.

Evidence exists that indicate there may have been a roof above the structure as suggested by four holes in the masonry. Also, the line across the front suggests that there was a shed across the front on the lower level.

Smokehouse: This small structure is located directly behind the main house. Constructed of white-washed random rubble stone approximately 1'-10" thick, the smokehouse measures 10'-2" square in plan and 10'-8" from the floor to the ridge. The gable roof is covered with slates, with the ridge running perpendicular to the front elevation. The gables are frame, covered with German siding.

The one-story outbuilding is pierced by a vertical door hung on three strap hinges and a 2'-0" square opening to the attic space. An interior pair of doors composed of vertical boards opens inwards and when closed, creates an air space between these doors and the exterior door.

The entire interior of the building is sheathed in vertical boards, while the floor is concrete.

Weave house: The weave house is located near the northeast corner of the main house. Situated on a slight hill, the rubble stone foundation contains a large opening on the southeast rear elevation. The stone foundation supports a one-and-one-half story heavy timber frame structure, sheathed in clapboarding and painted white. This structure contains a large partially exposed interior end chimney on the southwest elevation. A gable roof covered with dark gray mineral-surfaced composition shingles runs parallel to the front elevation.

Openings in the structure include a four panel door and three sliding two-pane windows on the first floor and three fixed two-pane windows on the second floor.

The interior ground floor is a large open space with a walk-in open hearth. This floor was used as a washroom and storage area. The first floor is one large space with stone chimney covering almost the entire wall. There is a small opening near the ceiling, presumably for a stove pipe. An open-tread stair leads to the attic and is located next to the chimney in the northwest corner. This floor was the main work room. The attic is a large open space containing the narrowed chimney flue. There is no opening in the flue for the addition of a stove. The room is poorly lit and was probably used for storage.

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in cooperation with the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, supervised by the National Park Service and funded by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The project, which extended from 1967 to 1971, was under the general direction of James C. Massey, Chief of HABS. This structure was measured and drawn in the summer of 1970 under the direction of Melvin M. Rotsch (Texas A & M University), Project Supervisor, by student assistant architects John Albers (University Florida), and Gary W. Kreger (University of Virginia), in the HABS field office at Millbrook, New Jersey in the project area of the Tocks Island Reservoir and the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. The historical data was written by Lynn Beebe Weaver, project historian in 1971. The written data was edited for transmittal to the Library of Congress in the summer of 1980 by Kent R. Newell of the HABS staff. The photographs were taken by George A. Eisenman in 1970.